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ABSTRACT

An overview is given of the progress of physical education teacher education from 1930 through 1959. The teaching of physical education gained the status of a profession during the 1930's, when normal schools were expanded into teachers colleges and four year teacher preparation programs. The curriculum changed from rigid physical training programs to more flexible programs with individual choices emphasizing methodology, fundamental science, psychology, and health. During the war years, enrollment in physical education declined; when enrollment rose after the second world war, conflict arose regarding the emphasis on the component of fitness, which some professionals considered too narrow. Conferences were held to address this issue and others, including womens' athletics and the recreation component. In the 1950's, graduate programs grew, as did specialization within the physical education field. The 1930's, 1940's, and 1950's were the years for the maturing of professional preparation programs in physical education. (CB)

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PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION 1930-1959

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Historical Overview of Professional Preparation
in Physical Education
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We should keep in mind while looking at these next three decades that we will be talking about an administrative organization of our profession which was unique among academic disciplines and which perhaps, had an influence on its growth and development. I am referring to the separate departments of physical education for women and the departments of physical education for men which existed at the time and which were considered appropriate structures by both men and women. Generally speaking, we can say that professional preparation programs in departments for women were concerned with preparing young women to teach physical education in grades one through twelve and to conduct intramural programs. Departments of physical education for men prepared young men to coach and to teach physical education primarily in secondary schools. While men and women physical educators were concerned with the same broad areas of professional preparation, different emphases in their programs were apparent.

However, both men and women physical educators were involved on an equal basis when it came to representation and debate in professional conferences and workshops on this topic. The direction which professional preparation has taken has been a blending and sometimes compromise of the

ideas and philosophies of all professional personnel.

The 30's were known as the Depression Years--a period of an all-time low in the economic life in the United States. Few persons or organizations escaped the devastation of the economic turmoil of the country. Colleges and universities experienced declining enrollments to an alarming degree for money simply wasn't available for many college-aged youth. Public schools dropped physical education and other frills in an effort to save money. There was an over supply of physical education teachers as well as teachers in all fields.

Despite these adverse circumstances a number of significant changes occurred in professional preparation programs in our field. Normal schools became teachers colleges and the 3-year preparation programs of the 20's were expanded to 4-year baccalaureate degree programs. This was an important change because it gave the teaching of physical education, along with other teaching areas, the status of a profession.

Considerable discussion occurred among professionals in the field concerning the formal versus the informal system of physical education. The informal system prevailed. There was a gradual but distinct move away from the calisthenics and exercise programs to a games and sport-oriented curriculum. Activities included team and individual sports, folk and square dancing and swimming. The orientation of these activities was to provide for social

development of the performers. Skill, while desirable, was not to be the major outcome at least for women. Men, because of their close association with athletics, continued to emphasize skill development as well as social outcomes.

The curriculum in physical education was expanded from the previous "training programs" to include a greater emphasis on methodology, the fundamental sciences and psychology. There was a growing concern for the need to emphasize the social development of teachers--to provide a broad background in general education rather than just instruction in physical education in preparation programs. Some programs eliminated some of the science requirements such as chemistry and physics to provide more time for these newer concerns. Interest in psychology with its emphasis on individual differences was incorporated into theory courses in physical education.

Courses in health or hygiene began to appear as a part of professional preparation programs. This thrust was in part a response to the criticisms growing out of World War I draft statistics as well as an increasing awareness of the importance of health instruction for young people. Electives also began to appear as opposed to the strict requirements of earlier programs.

Programs for men and women, although conducted separately, were often housed in the same facility. Department chairmen enjoyed long tenure in their positions. Many

chairmen remained in the same position for a professional life time which had some distinct advantages. Their long tenure enabled them to provide continuity and stability for their programs which is not so possible in our fruit basket upset system of the present.

During this period standards for admission to teacher education were raised as were certification requirements. Admission requirements frequently included some form of character assessment of the candidate such as a letter of recommendation from a high school principal, personal interviews and psychological tests. While most professional physical educators subscribed to these requirements, they were not implemented universally.

Students majoring in physical education during the 30's found it necessary to select a second teaching field in order to enhance their chances of employment in the tight job market.

Considerable interest was generated by studies which were conducted to identify the characteristics needed for successful teaching. The results of these studies became the basis for curriculum revision.

Foss, in her dissertation states,

> At the end of the Depression, the profession of physical education had been strengthened. Certification standards had risen, the 4-year programs were firmly entrenched, and for those who survived the rigors of student poverty, college life had held many satisfactions. (p. 148)

On December 7, 1941, the United States entered World War II. Enrollments in colleges and universities again declined sharply as both men and women entered the armed forces. For institutions just beginning to recover from the Depression years, this second enrollment decline made it difficult for some to continue to operate. Many professional men and women physical educators dropped out of teaching temporarily to serve in the armed forces. Physical fitness programs were an important part of the training of recruits and our professional personnel frequently were responsible for the organization and administration of these programs. The armed forces also promoted extensive programs of sport as part of their training and recreational programs.

Fitness on all levels was a major emphasis during the war years. While curricular changes in professional preparation programs during the war were minimal, major students were organized to conduct fitness programs on campuses in the dormitories and other housing units so they were exposed to this fitness emphasis.

After the war years there was a sharp increase in enrollment at all institutions of higher education. The G.I. Bill made it possible for large numbers of veterans to return to colleges and universities to complete their interrupted education. Peak enrollments occurred during the years of 1948 and 49.

Interest in physical fitness as a curricular direction provided a source of conflict among leaders in our field. There were those who welcomed the fitness component and a return to an emphasis on physical development while others felt an emphasis on fitness was much too narrow a focus.

A number of important conferences on professional preparation were held in the 40's. In May, 1948, a National Conference on Undergraduate Professional Preparation in Health Education, Physical Education and Recreation was held at Jackson's Mill, West Virginia. This conference touched on many aspects of professional preparation including the balance between general education, basic sciences and professional physical education courses in the curriculum, preparation of qualified teachers, facilities, requirements for admission and retention, desired competencies of graduates and so forth. Concern was expressed that many of the increasing numbers of colleges and universities which were offering work in physical education could not meet the recommendations regarding facilities and adequately prepared faculty. It was the hope that accreditation would be initiated which would eliminate some of the substandard programs.

Two years later a similar conference on graduate education in physical education was held at Pere Marquette State Park in Illinois. The reports of these two conferences became standard references for professionals for some

years to come.

Some of the curricular changes that appeared during this decade included expansion of offerings in health and recreation courses as these elements gained more prominence. These offerings were still a part of professional preparation in physical education however. The corrective aspect of physical education was deemphasized and the term "adaptive" physical education took its place. The games and sport orientation of activity work continued as team, dual and individual sports and swimming remained popular. Dance was also a part of the activity programs although in some universities dance theory was introduced. With the increasingly healthy economy more jobs became available and specialization within physical education became an option replacing the necessity for a second teaching field. Specialization in this case meant more hours to be taken in physical education. The inclusion of Health and Recreation in departmental titles acknowledged the expanded responsibilities of professional preparation in physical education.

The intramural programs for women were an integral part of their professional preparation. These programs were organized and administered by Departments of Physical Education for Women. The Women's Athletic Associations or the Women's Recreation Associations as they were beginning to be called, reflected the philosophy of the NSWA which endorsed the concept of involvement of all girls and women

in sport, not just the highly skilled. Though intramural programs were open to all interested women, intramurals were the only program available to the highly skilled woman athlete. Physical education women major students were heavily involved in the organization of these intramural teams and in officiating. Sometimes these activities received academic credit as part of formal course work but often these activities were simply expected of the major student.

As teachers colleges moved from their single purpose organization and became universities, new administrative structures for physical education appeared. Colleges or Schools of Health, Physical Education and Recreation were formed but these still included separate departments for women and departments for men. Physical education for men retained a close affiliation with athletics and often benefitted from this association by having the use of newer, more modern facilities. When a new athletic facility was built the "old" gym was usually given to the women for their programs.

Both men and women's professional preparation programs reflected their interest in the group process as part of their methods classes.

Specific requirements for admission were largely dropped and admission to programs in physical education were based on general admission requirements for the institution

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as a whole. While a number of conferences had recommended the need for a 5-year program of preparation in teacher education this recommendation was not accepted and curricular requirements had to be juggled to fit into the traditional four-year program.

The 40's were characterized by growth, optimism and economic recovery. The number of institutions offering programs in physical education grew rapidly, as did graduate education particularly at the master's degree level. Concern and debate over what constituted superior preparation programs continued to hold the attention of professional personnel.

The decade of the 50's continued the optimistic growth of the post-war years. Perhaps the single most significant trend in physical education was the growth of graduate programs throughout the country. The introduction of specialization within the field began to appear. Programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels remained separated by sex although co-ed classes were available. In my own doctoral program I was required to take at least one course across the river from the men's department.

In curriculum fitness continued to be emphasized spurred on by the publicity concerning the findings of the Kraus-Weber test results in 1953 and the development in 1954 of Eisenhower's President's Council on Youth Fitness. Team sports, dual and individual sports, dance and aquatics were

the continuing standard offerings in the activity programs.

Professional women physical educators were becoming interested in Movement Education which had been developed in England for use with elementary school children.

Of concern to both men and women alike were the beginning debates concerning the discipline of physical education. Most accepted the premise that the profession had a discipline but there was little agreement about what it was.

It was during this decade that the idea of competency approach to professional preparation appeared.

The various national conferences, surveys, research projects and other studies which were held frequently regarding professional preparation resulted in many different proposals for curricular change but consensus on these ideas was seldom reached. While no national or standardized curriculum was ever accepted by the profession, a review of catalogs of institutions throughout the country revealed many more similarities than differences among professional preparations programs. A lack of agreement of terminology or nomenclature made differences in professional preparation programs appear greater than they actually were. Basically the curriculum was composed of academic courses required by the institution, foundation sciences, professional education and professional courses in health, physical education and recreation. These components were found in some combination in all professional preparation programs.

Evaluative criteria for rating professional programs served to improve the quality of preparation programs. Various organizations served this function throughout the years with the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education performing this task in the 40's and then relinquishing this function to the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education in 1954.

Throughout the 30's, 40's and 50's professional preparation programs grew in number and in quality. The overriding concern of professional physical educators was to strengthen programs and to reflect the social forces of the times. Much credit for the continuing study and improvement of professional preparation programs must be given to the leadership provided by professional organizations: American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, the National Association for Physical Education of College Women, National College Physical Education Association for Men and others--which conducted workshops, promoted conferences and devoted much of their meeting times to discussion and debate on all aspects of these programs. These three decades can be thought of as the maturing of professional preparation programs in physical education. Growth was steady and based on the best known educational theory. Persons prepared through these programs were competent to conduct physical education programs in our schools and

universities which met societal expectations and needs. While disagreements among professionals in physical education continued to exist it was a period of relative calm for the physical education profession.

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